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Message Text

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 02800 040939Z

43
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 COA-01 DLOS-03 CG-00 DOTE-00

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 SS-15 NSC-05 L-02

PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 SAJ-01 EB-07 COME-00 /070 W
---------- 007856
R 040905Z MAR 75
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8414
INFO AMCONSUL SAPPORO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EFIS, JA, UR
SUBJ: INCREASE IN SOVIET FISHING NEAR JAPAN

SUMMARY. THIS SEASON'S INCREASE IN SOVIET FISHING OPERATIONS OFF THE PACIFIC COAST OF JAPAN HAS SPARKED POPULAR PROTEST, POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIONS, AND PRESS SPECULATION CONCERNING A VARIETY OF SOVIET MOTIVES. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING CURRENT FISHING SEASON MORE THAN 120 SOVIET FISHING VESSELS HAVE BEEN SIGHTED NEAR PACIFIC COAST OF JAPAN (FROM HOKKAIDO TO IZU PENSINSULA IN SHIZUOKA PREFECTURE) COMPARED TO TOTAL OF ABOUT 50 DURING 1973-74 SEASON. REPORTS OF SOVIET DAMAGE TO JAPANESE COASTAL FISHING GEAR HAVE RISNE FROM 453 CASES IN 1971-74 TO 528 CASES IN JAN-FEB 1975 ALONE. USSR FLEET OPERATING CLOSER TO JAPAN'S 3-MILE TERRITORIAL LIMIT AND MOVING NOTICEABLY FASTER AND IN MORE WIDELY SCATTERED PATTERN THAN IN PAST YEARS.

2. IN ADDITION TO 17 SOVIET MOTHERSHIPS AND 9 CARRIERS--
50 STERN TRAWLERS, 40 SIDE TRAWLERS, AND 5 PURSE SEINERS
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PAGE 02 TOKYO 02800 040939Z

HAVE BEEN OBSERVED. SOVIET USE OF TRAWL AND PURSE SEINE

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NETS PARTICULARLY ANNOYING TO COASTAL FISHERMEN WHO, UNDER JAPANESE CONSERVATION REGULATIONS, ARE LIMITED TO LESS EFFICIENT GILLNET AND POLE-AND-LINE FISHERY. PROTEST ACTIVITIES HAVE INCLUDED LOCAL RALLIES, A GROUP SAILING OF 70 BOATS INTO SOVIET OPERATING AREA OFF HOKKAIDO, AND FEB 28 MASS MEETING IN TOKYO ATTENDED BY ABOUT 1,000. HOKKAIDO GOVERNOR DOGAKINAI, AGRUCILTURE AND FORESTRY MINISTER ABE, FISHERIES AGENCY DIRECTOR-GENERAL UCHIMURA, AND OTHER LEADING GOJ OFFICIALS HAVE INSPECTED SOVIET FLEET ACTIVITIES BY HELICOPTER. LDP FISHERIES COMMITTEE PASSED RESOLUTION FEB 13 RECOMMENDING EXPANSION JAPANESE TERRITORIAL WATERS TO 12 MILES, AND USSR FISHING ACTIVITIES NEAR JAPAN HAVE BEEN TAKEN UP SEVERAL TIMES IN DIET AND THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS WITH SOVIET GOVT.

3. PRESS SPECULATION CONCERNING REASONS FOR INCREASED SOVIET FISHING NEAR JAPANESE COAST HAS FOCUSED ON POOR 1974 SOVIET CATCHES OF MACKEREL AND SAURY IN THE ATLANTIC (DUE HEAVY EUROPEAN FISHING) AND ALEUTIAN ISLANDS AREAS, RECENT SOVIET DISPUTES WITH NORWEGIAN AND U.S. COASTAL FISHERMEN, AND SOVIET WISH TO INCREASE PRESSURES ON JAPAN IN RELATION TO CURRENT USSR/JAPAN AND PRC/JAPAN FISHERIES NEGOTIATIONS. POSSIBLE SOVIET INTENTION OF ESTABLISHING VESTED RIGHTS TO FISH OFF JAPANESE COAST IN REPARATION FOR 200-MILE ECONOMIC ZONE AND DESIRE TO PROVOKE OWN EXPULSION FROM JAPANESE COASTAL FISHING IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH GROUNDS FOR DRIVING JAPANESE FISHERMEN AWAY FROM SOVIET COASTAL AREAS ALSO HAVE BEEN CITED IN PRESS AS REASONS. HOWEVER, IN RECENT DISCUSSION WITH E/C COUNSELOR, FISHERIES AGENCY COUNCILLOR YONEZAWA DISCOUNTED THE LAST TWO TOEORIES BECAUSE IT IS TOO LATE NOW TO STRENGTHEN HISTORICAL CLAIMS TO FISHING RIGHTS AND MARMFUL TO SOVIETS' OWN INTERESTS AS MAJOR FISHING NATIONS TO INCITE CONFLICTS IN FOREIGN COASTAL AREAS.

4. AFTER MORE THAN TWO YEARS OF TALKS SUBSTANTIAL AGREEMENT REACHED DEC 1974 ON OUTLINE OF USSR-JAPAN FISHING GEAR AND SAFETY ACCORD TO BE SUPERVISED BY GOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE SIMILAR TO USSR ARRANGEMENTS WITH CANADA, NORWAY, AND UNITED STATES. THERE MAY BE FURTHER INFORMAL
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DISCUSSIONS ON SETTLEMENT PROCEDURES FOR GEAR CONFLICTS IN COURSE OF FISHERY QUOTA NEGOTIATIONS CURRENTLY IN PROGRESS IN TOKYO AND MOSCOW.
HODGSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, FISHING LIMITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975TOKYO02800
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750075-0210
From: TOKYO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750382/aaaacwlx.tel
Line Count: 111
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 JUN 2003 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <30 OCT 2003 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INCREASE IN SOVIET FISHING NEAR JAPAN SUMMARY. THIS SEASON'S INCREASE IN SOVIET FISHING OPERA-
TAGS: EFIS, JA, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006